Lesson Overview

In this lesson, participants learn about the important characteristics required of caregivers, the infant’s innate need for nurturing, and his or her fragile nature and total dependence on the caregiver. Participants also learn what to expect from children in the various ages and stages of development, and how to care for children at these times.

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, participants will be able to:
- Identify and describe the characteristics of good caregivers
- Recognize what behaviors to expect from children based on developmental ages and stages
- Apply appropriate discipline techniques to help children model desired behavior

Lesson at a Glance

In preparation for this lesson, read the instructor background information located at the end of this lesson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Approximate Class Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOCUS</td>
<td>• Caregiver Self-Assessment (one per participant)</td>
<td>1. Print/photocopy participant assessment and handout. 2. Prepare Baby with accessories for demo of any care event. 3. If you are not including all lessons from the course, update the Course Schedule handout included on the CD-ROM to reflect the lessons you will use in the course before printing/photocopying.</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEARN</td>
<td>• Caregiver Characteristics I worksheet (one per participant)</td>
<td>1. Print/photocopy participant worksheets and handouts.</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Caregiver Characteristics II handout (one per participant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Important Role of the Caregiver handout (one per participant)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Caregiver Scenarios handout (one per group of three or four participants)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Analyzing Caregiver Scenarios worksheet (one per group of three or four participants)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REVIEW</td>
<td>• Fan and Pick Cards (one per group of three or four participants)</td>
<td>1. Print/photocopy Fan and Pick Cards and Fan and Pick Mat. 2. Purchase or obtain scissors.</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fan and Pick Mat (one per group of three or four participants)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Scissors (one per group of three or four participants)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
FOCUS: Caregiver Self-Assessment

10 minutes

Purpose:
Participants complete a caregiver self-assessment to think about their characteristics and learning needs for the course. During this time they listen to RealCare® Baby cry and then discuss their reactions to hearing the crying while trying to concentrate on something else.

Materials:
- Caregiver Self-Assessment
- RealCare® Baby with accessories
- Course Schedule handout

Facilitation Steps:
1. Give each participant a photocopy of the Caregiver Self-Assessment.
2. As participants begin completing the assessment, program RealCare® Baby to demonstrate any care event, altering event duration to 180 seconds (three minutes). Let Baby cry—do not attend to its need. Baby’s cry will intensify as care is not given. After three minutes, Baby will stop crying.
3. Divide participants into groups of four and instruct them to discuss how they felt about the crying while they were trying to complete the self-assessment. Did anyone get frustrated, distracted, annoyed, and/or angry? Select a few groups to tell how they felt.
4. Ask participants to imagine being unable to walk, crawl, talk, or communicate their needs and wants. How would they feel? The only method of communication an infant has is crying. Caregivers must empathize with the child, and work to find out what the infant is trying to communicate, first by attending to his or her basic needs: feeding, burping, diapering, soothing and comforting, checking to ensure that the infant does not have a fever, is not too hot or cold, and so on. Explain that in this lesson we will be talking about the characteristics good caregivers should have.
5. Briefly review some of the questions on the self-assessment. Explain that the purpose was to help them think about their experience in working with children and their caregiver skills.
6. Give each participant a copy of the Course Schedule handout and discuss briefly.
The Important Role of the Caregiver

Name: ____________________________
Date: ____________________________

Directions: Answer the following questions by placing an “x” in the appropriate box, writing your response in the space provided, or circling the best answer.

1. The youngest child I have cared for was:
   - ☐ Infant (newborn to 12 months)
   - ☐ Toddler (1 to 3 years)
   - ☐ Preschooler (3 to 5 years)
   - ☐ School-ager (5 years and older)
   - ☐ I have never cared for a child.

2. The longest length of time I have cared for a child was:
   - ☐ 1 to 4 hours
   - ☐ 5 to 8 hours
   - ☐ Overnight
   - ☐ Days at a time
   - ☐ I have never cared for a child.

3. I have cared for up to ______ children at a time.

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, I would rate my skills as the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to make decisions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to be patient with children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to communicate with children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to communicate with parents/guardians</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to attend to an infant’s basic needs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to have fun with children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to think quickly in an emergency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to perform first aid and CPR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to handle misbehavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of developmental stages</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. The reasons I want to be a caregiver are:
   - ____________________________________________________________
   - ____________________________________________________________
   - ____________________________________________________________

www.realityworks.com
LEARN: Characteristics of a Caregiver

25 minutes

Purpose:
This activity helps participants learn about the characteristics of a caregiver and why they are important in caring for children. Participants read caregiver scenarios. In small groups, they discuss the scenarios, incorporating thought about the skills and characteristics demonstrated, and how they would have handled the situation. The groups share their thoughts in a large class discussion.

Materials:
- Caregiver Characteristics I worksheet
- Caregiver Characteristics II handout
- The Important Role of the Caregiver handout
- Caregiver Scenarios handout
- Analyzing Caregiver Scenarios worksheet

Facilitation Steps:

Part 1: Think, Pair, Share
1. Divide participants into pairs.
2. Give each participant a copy of the Caregiver Characteristics I worksheet and ask groups to discuss what they consider to be important caregiver characteristics. After three minutes, instruct groups to share their ideas with another group. Lead a class discussion, asking groups to share their ideas.
3. Give each participant a copy of the Caregiver Characteristics II handout. Lead a class discussion by asking why the caregiver characteristics listed on the handout are important in caring for an infant or toddler.
4. Give each participant a copy of The Important Role of the Caregiver handout and discuss briefly. Note any valid points that are mentioned. Clarify, elaborate, and add information as needed during the class discussion. For example, infants cannot think beyond their own personal needs. They are totally dependant on their caregiver to meet all their needs: physical, intellectual, emotional, and social. They need to feel secure and need a great deal of attention.

Part 2: Caregiver Scenarios
1. Divide participants into groups of three or four.
2. Give each group a copy of the Caregiver Scenarios handout. Assign one scenario per group.
3. Instruct groups to read their scenario and discuss the characteristics and skills demonstrated by the caregiver as well as the child’s perspective, if appropriate (i.e., what is motivating the child’s behavior and how could the caregiver model the desired behavior?).
4. Give each group a copy of the Analyzing Caregiver Scenarios worksheet and instruct them to complete it for the scenario they were given to analyze. Lead a class discussion, asking groups to share their observations about the scenarios.
Caregiver Characteristics I

Directions: With your group, brainstorm ideas about what you consider to be important characteristics and skills of a caregiver. As you brainstorm, remember that all ideas should be recorded.

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Characteristics important in caring for an infant or toddler:

- Empathy and nurturing
- Decision-making skills
- Patience
- Safety and health consciousness
- Communication skills
- Ability to handle stress
- Understanding of child developmental stages

Empathy and Nurturing

Empathy is the ability to put oneself in the position of another and try to understand how that person is feeling; to have sympathy and compassion for another person. Nurturing involves giving tender care and protection while showing love, support, concern, and encouragement.

Decision-Making Skills

Caregivers encounter many different situations with infants and toddlers. Each situation requires that a caregiver be able to evaluate the situation and determine the best course of action to take:

- Identify the problem—what do you need to decide?
- List the various solutions—what are your choices?
- Evaluate each solution—consider the positive and negative outcomes.
- Choose the best solution.

Patience

Infants and toddlers can try your patience. They dawdle, they may refuse to do what you want or need them to do, and they often want to do the same things over and over. Patience is the ability to endure waiting or delay without becoming annoyed or upset; to persevere calmly when faced with difficulties.

Safety and Health Consciousness

Caregivers must be continually alert to ensure that there are no safety hazards near an infant or toddler, and that children are not engaging in dangerous activities. Caregivers must know how to perform basic first aid and infant and toddler CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). They should also be able to determine whether there is a medical emergency, and how to respond quickly and appropriately.

Communication Skills

Good communicators help guide the actions of children in a positive manner. If children misbehave, be sure they understand that you do not dislike them, even though you do not like their behavior. Use positive feedback to reinforce good behavior such as, “I like how you picked up your toys after playing with them.” Use corrective feedback to stop or change misbehavior, to tell the child what they should do, or what the appropriate thing to do is, or what you would like them to do. Corrective feedback uses positive requests in a respectful manner. For example, “Sally, please draw the picture on your own paper,” rather than saying, “Do not draw on Billy’s paper.”

Here are some basic guidelines when communicating with children:

Be Respectful: When you treat children with respect, you are modeling the behavior you expect from them. They in turn will treat you with respect. Use “please” and “thank you.” Do not call them names or say they are bad. This can hurt a child’s feelings and does not help a situation.

Keep it Simple: Children may have a hard time understanding long instructions or long words. Speak at a level that is easy for a child to understand. Keep your sentences short and simple.

Listen: Look at the child when he or she is talking to you. If possible, bend down so you are at eye level with the child. If you are not able to do what the child wants or you need to focus your attention on something else first, let the child know that you heard his or her request.

Remain Calm: Even if you are angry or frustrated with an infant or a toddler, use a calm voice and remain calm. If you need to, take a minute for yourself, and take a deep breath and count to ten.

Ability to Handle Stress

Sometimes children may misbehave. This may be an indication that they need help controlling their behavior and expressing themselves in a positive way. Remember that an infant is not capable of misbehaving. However, when a toddler, preschooler, or school-ager misbehaves, you have three courses of action you can take:
You can ignore it.

You can say something to correct the child and change the behavior, telling the child what you would like him or her to do instead.

You can physically take control of the situation. This is reserved for situations in which the child is doing something that is a threat to themselves or to others. For example, if a child is hitting or biting another child, you should gently grasp the child's arm and tell him or her that he or she is not allowed to do that. If the child appears to be angry, ask why he or she is angry and talk the situation through. If the child is about to throw an object at someone, take the object away.

As the caregiver, you need to decide which course of action is most appropriate, and then take it. Remind the child that it is the behavior, not the child that you do not like. Children need to know that you will not stop liking them if they misbehave. Use positive feedback to help guide children before they misbehave, and make positive and respectful requests when they misbehave. Modeling respect helps children see how they should behave with you and with each other. Never make fun of, hit, spank, shake, or shout at a child, no matter how frustrated you become with their behavior.

Understanding of Child Developmental Stages

All infants and toddlers pass through standard stages of development at specific ages. However, because all infants and toddlers are different, they may not be at the same developmental level as others, even though they are the same age. Some children progress more quickly, others more slowly. Caregivers need to understand the stages of development and the abilities of the children in their care.
The Important Role of the Caregiver

Caregivers attend to the needs of children at preschools, nursery schools, businesses, day care centers, and in private homes. In these settings, it generally involves the nurturing and teaching of children ages five and younger, but may also include school-aged children who come before and after the school day and/or during the summer. In addition to ensuring the safety and well-being of a child, a good caregiver attends to the emotional, intellectual, and creative needs of children. Caregivers should be enthusiastic and involved as they organize stimulating and interesting activities, manage creative play times, and supervise interaction with other children. Caregivers must also know how to communicate with infants and toddlers at their level of understanding in a nurturing and positive way.

Caregivers must keep records of each child’s progress including daily observations and information about activities, meals served, and medications administered, and discuss the child’s development and needs with the parents, who often feel left out of their children’s day-to-day lives. They instruct children in health and personal habits such as eating, resting, and toilet habits, and identify signs of emotional or developmental problems in children and bring them to parents’ or guardians’ attention.

Being a caregiver is physically and emotionally draining. The caregiver will find that he or she is continually bending down, picking up, standing, lifting, or carrying small children. Infants and toddlers may cry or scream for little reason, they have little or no control over their bodily functions, and they require a great deal of attention and nurturing. Even with these drawbacks, people who work with children do so because they love them and enjoy being an important part of their physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development. The early childhood years are the most crucial in a person’s intellectual and emotional development, and often shape a child’s first memories. Caregivers see the importance of this role and have a strong desire to be a part of that special time in every person’s life.
Scenario 1

David is two years old and is starting his first day at Aria’s day care center. As David approaches with his father, Aria greets them and stoops down to look David in the eyes. She smiles and tells him her name.

As David’s father leaves, Aria shows David around the room and explains the rules of behavior. She introduces David to the other two-year-old children and asks him to choose a toy he would like to play with until snack time. David chooses a toy that another toddler is playing with and he grabs it from him. Aria scolds David in a loud voice and tells him to apologize to the other child.

David begins to cry. She comforts him and asks him what is wrong. He is crying too hard to answer, so she sits him down in a chair and tells him he can play when he is ready to stop crying and start acting nice.

Scenario 2

Aaron is six weeks old and is being cared for by his aunt, Marion, while his mother works three days per week. Aaron gets fussy around 3:00 p.m. and tends to cry non-stop until his mother picks him up after work. Aaron spits up quite a bit when he is fed. Marion makes a note to mention this to Aaron’s mother; it could be a problem with acid reflux.

Today, Marion has noticed that Aaron refuses to take the bottle and cries more than usual. She checks to make sure he is dry and that he does not have a fever. She tries to get him to look at a mobile in his crib and she holds a mirror to his face, hoping to distract him, but neither of these is working. Aaron continues to cry. In frustration, Marion goes into the other room to wait for him to stop crying.

Scenario 3

Rachel is three years old and loves to play with her caregiver, Patricia. Patricia is the day care provider for eight children. Rachel likes to follow Patricia around and help her take care of the infants in Patricia’s care. Rachel tends to be whiny around the other children. She gets angry easily if she does not get her way.

One day Patricia notices that Rachel has been taking the snacks away from the little girl she sits next to during snack time. Patricia explains to Rachel that she is not allowed to take other children’s snacks or food at any time. She tells Rachel that it is important to not take other people’s food. Rachel replies that she is hungry. Patricia explains that if Rachel is still hungry after her snack, she should let Patricia know, so Patricia can give her some more.

Later that day, Patricia sees that Rachel is angry over a toy that someone else has and that she wants. Patricia asks Rachel why she is angry. Rachel explains that she wanted to play with that toy. Patricia responds by saying that she understands what it is like to want something that someone else has, but that Rachel needs to be patient and she can have a turn with the toy later. She gets Rachel interested in another activity.

Scenario 4

Jordan is caring for three children at the home of his neighbors: Nick (18 months), Carl (three years old), and Jessica (six years old). Jordan has decided that going to the park down the street would be a good way to spend the afternoon. Jordan announces the plan right after lunch. He tells Carl and Jessica to get their shoes and jackets on while he changes Nick’s diaper and gets him ready to be put into the stroller.

Carl is tired after lunch and wants to stay home and watch TV. Jordan tells him it’s time to get going and he can watch TV later. After Jordan changes Nick’s diaper and has him ready to go, he notices that Carl is still putting on his shoes. Carl is just learning how to put on his shoes and wants to show Jordan. Jordan tells Carl that they do not have time for that. He puts Carl’s shoes on for him. Carl becomes angry, begins to cry, and pulls off his shoes. Jordan becomes angry and tells Carl that if he does not keep his shoes on, he cannot come to the park. Carl is glad to be able to stay home and watch TV, not fully understanding that he will be left alone and might become afraid.

Jordan puts Carl in front of the TV to watch a half-hour show, and decides that he will take Nick and Jessica down a couple of houses and then check back to see if Carl changes his mind while they are gone. In the mean time, the children’s mother calls and Carl answers the phone. She is very concerned that Jordan has left Carl alone while he brought the others to the park.
Scenario 5
Juan is six months old and goes to a day care program each day. Juan is a good-natured infant and very easy to care for. When Juan’s mother comes to pick him up from day care, she asks how Juan did. The provider explains that Juan slept most of the day in a swinging crib. She seems very pleased at how easy Juan is to care for. As Juan’s mother gets home, she notices that Juan’s head is beginning to get flat in the back. She realizes that Juan is spending most of the day sleeping, and this may explain the sleepless nights he has been having since beginning at day care.
Analyzing Caregiver Scenarios

Name: ____________________________
Date: ____________________________

Directions: Read your scenarios with your group and discuss and respond to each of the questions below. Be prepared to share your scenarios and responses with the large group.

**Decision-Making Skills**
Did the caregiver:
- _____ Identify the problem?
- _____ Determine choices for a solution?
- _____ Decide on the best solution?

**Communication Skills with the Child**
Did the caregiver:
- _____ Keep rules and instructions simple and clear?
- _____ Be specific about what he or she was saying?
- _____ Acknowledge the child’s feelings?
- _____ Show the child respect?
- _____ Use a calm voice?
- _____ Listen to the child and respond?

**Helping Children Behave**
Did the caregiver:
- _____ Consider the child’s developmental stage?
- _____ Give positive feedback when the child behaved?
- _____ Give positive correction when the child misbehaved?
- _____ Take one of the three courses of action when the child misbehaved?
  - _____ 1. Ignore it?
  - _____ 2. Say something to correct the child?
  - _____ 3. Physically take control of the situation?

**Caregiver Stress**
Did the caregiver:
- _____ Acknowledge his or her frustration level?
- _____ Take steps to handle his or her stress?

**Communication Skills with the Parent(s)**
Did the caregiver:
- _____ Accurately communicate the situation?
- _____ Encourage two-way communication?

**Handling Stress with an Infant**
Did the caregiver:
- _____ Use techniques for soothing?
- _____ Use techniques for handling stress?

How would you have handled the situation differently?
- __________________________________________________________
- __________________________________________________________
- __________________________________________________________
- __________________________________________________________
- __________________________________________________________
- __________________________________________________________
REVIEW: Fan and Pick Game

10 minutes

Purpose:
The purpose of this activity is to review the main points from the lesson and to give participants an opportunity to think about what they learned.

Materials:
- Fan and Pick Cards
- Fan and Pick Mat
- Scissors

Facilitation Steps:
1. Divide participants into groups of four.
2. Give each group a copy of Fan and Pick Cards and Fan and Pick Mat.
3. Give each group a pair of scissors and instruct them to cut apart the cards.
4. Instruct groups to take turns playing the four roles shown on the mat:
   - Fan: Participant who fans out the cards for the next participant to choose from.
   - Pick and Read Question: Participant who chooses one card and reads the question aloud.
   - Answer: Participant who answers the question.
   - Check and Praise: Participant who responds to the answer with praise for correct answer, correction for an incorrect answer, or simply acknowledges the answer given.
5. Explain that roles rotate by turning the mat clockwise after each turn, rotating four times so that each participant has an opportunity to play each role. Circulate the room and offer assistance and answer questions as necessary.
### Fan and Pick Cards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name three important characteristics of caregivers.</th>
<th>Identify two places where caregivers attend to the needs of children.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe a time in your childhood when a caregiver showed empathy.</td>
<td>What did you learn or discover while completing the scenario activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain why infants require love, but cannot give love.</td>
<td>Why do you want to be a caregiver?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why is patience an important part of caregiving?</td>
<td>What does it mean to be nurturing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are some negative things you learned NOT to do in today’s lesson?</td>
<td>What are some positive things you learned to do in today’s lesson?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fan & Pick Mat

Fan & Pick

Pick & Read Question

Check & Praise

Answer

Unit One—Lesson One
The Important Role of the Caregiver
Instructor Background Information

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Basic Infant Care
The Important Role of the Caregiver

Additional Resources

Publications:


Organizations and Web Sites:

Family Education
www.familyeducation.com
babygooroo.com
www.babygooroo.com
BabyCenter
www.babycenter.com
Zero To Three
www.zerotothree.org
University of Minnesota Extension
www.extension.umn.edu/Family
Love and Logic
www.loveandlogic.com

U.S. National Health Education Standards Supported
3.8.4; 3.12.4; 5.8.2; 7.8.2-3, 7.12.2-3

U.S. National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education Supported
4.1, 4.1.1; 15.2, 15.2.1